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# CONNECTED TO GIVE: KEY FINDINGS

NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN JEWISH GIVING

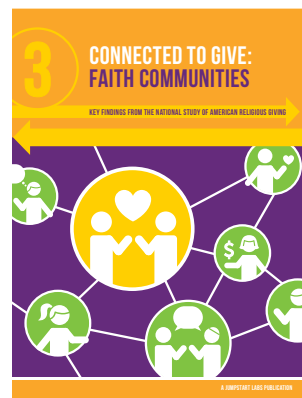
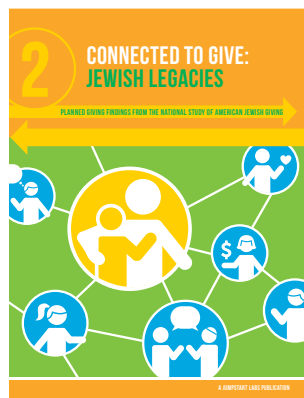


## ABOUT CONNECTED TO GIVE

*Connected to Give* is a collaborative project of a consortium of independent foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and Jewish federations working in partnership with Jumpstart to map the landscape of charitable giving by American Jews. *Connected to Give: Key Findings* from the National Study of American Jewish Giving is written by Jim Gerstein, Steven M. Cohen, & J. Shawn Landres.

## CONNECTED TO GIVE REPORT SERIES

*Connected to Give: Key Findings* is just the first in a series of reports based upon the wealth of data from National Study of American Jewish Giving. The key findings represent the top level of information gleaned from the studies, but there is much more to be explored. In addition to findings that relate giving to demography and identity, there are additional data about specific populations, particular areas of interest, and individual modes of giving. In the months following the publication of this Key Findings report (#1 in the *Connected to Give* series), we will be publishing a number of reports that go deeper on specific topics. Three reports currently are scheduled for release in 2013: planned giving (September/October), the multireligious key findings from the National Study of American Religious Giving (November) and congregational giving (December). Additional reports are planned for early 2014.



For updates, please make sure you are registered at [connectedtogive.org](http://connectedtogive.org) so that you may be notified as new information becomes available.

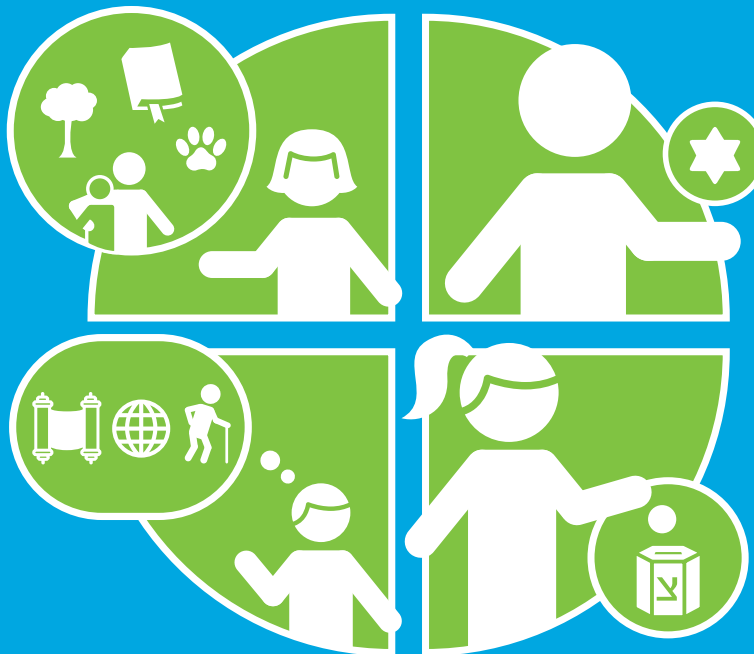
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## WHAT IS “JEWISH GIVING”?

For the purposes of this study we defined Jewish giving as inclusively as possible, in order to enable wide-ranging interpretations of the data, including those based on one or more narrower definitions. To that end, in *Connected to Give* research and reporting, Jewish giving may include any and/or all of the following:

- ▶ Giving by Jews, regardless of the type of beneficiary



- ▶ Giving to Jewish causes and Jewish organizations

- ▶ Giving for Jewish reasons, such as the obligation to give *tzedakah* (tithing) or the wish to engage in *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) or *g’milut chasadim* (acts of lovingkindness)

- ▶ Giving in Jewish ways, such as via the *gemach* (free loan) system, through *pushkes* (boxes into which to deposit coins for *tzedakah*), or in response to fundraising appeals connected to the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which stress *tzedakah*

## PREFACE

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The contemporary Jewish philanthropic system is confronting its greatest challenges since its formation more than a century ago. Sectarian services, including those of the Jewish community, helped build the social safety net of this country. The countless innovations of the Jewish communal system in the 20th century, such as family therapy, homecare, and vocational services to name but a few, illustrate the historical contribution to American society by Jewish organizations. Today, however, the forces that fostered solidarity and creativity in earlier generations have waned. For example, the argument for Jewish organization-focused philanthropy within the field of human services amidst a panoply of global crises—and new non-sectarian solutions to address them—is weakening. While the federation system has been losing donors and large membership institutions are losing members, Jewish service agencies report growing demand for their core priorities. New and innovative Jewish organizations—some with the best chance of engaging those most ambivalent about Jewish involvement—are struggling to find stable income to sustain themselves, let alone to scale their programs for national or global impact. The Jewish communal system itself, though it contains pockets of significant creativity, no longer leads the way in defining global or even American philanthropic and nonprofit innovation as a whole.

To map a path to success, we must know the territory. To that end, the *Connected to Give* report series marks a new effort to understand the Jewish philanthropic landscape and re-envision it for the new century. Based upon data from the National Study of American Jewish giving, these reports offer a comprehensive snapshot of Jewish charitable giving and reveals—for the first time at this breadth and depth—who gives, where they give, how much they give, what motivates them to give, and how giving among American Jews compares to giving by other Americans. To enable contextual understanding of the U.S. landscape of giving, a companion report (based on data from the National Study of American Religious Giving) will be released in November 2013. *Connected to Give: Faith Communities* will enable a more complete comparison of American Jewish households with evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, unaffiliated, and non-religious households.

Over the coming months, our team—which combines expertise in American philanthropy, the American Jewish community, social research, religious studies, and generational cohort analysis—will produce several topic-focused reports. These include deeper looks at planned giving (charitable bequests), innovation, congregations and denominations, Israel-related causes, gender and marital decision making, civic advocacy and social justice, and factors driving the charitable behaviors of younger donors, such as emerging technologies and methods of giving.

The *Connected to Give* reports are descriptive: they are intended to depict the philanthropic landscape as it is, not as some might wish it to be. However, these reports may challenge many of the working assumptions underlying Jewish

communal strategy. It is our hope that data from this project will inform and empower grantmakers and nonprofits to:

- ▶ Understand, anticipate, and respond to giving trends for the causes they support
- ▶ Create more effective donor marketing, education, and stewardship strategies
- ▶ Reshape the language and messages they use to engage prospective donors and mobilize existing ones
- ▶ Take concrete steps to improve donor trust and commitment
- ▶ Offer the best products and services for their stakeholders, as called upon by Jewish tradition

In short, the purpose of our phased multi-report rollout is not simply to share knowledge, but rather to enable and encourage the development of strategies for action.

We believe that the future of the Jewish philanthropic/nonprofit system depends on collective efforts to bring it to the forefront of the 21st century third sector, through innovation, collaboration, and impact by both established institutions serving traditional core priorities and by new nonprofit startups advancing creative alternative paths to Jewish engagement and action. Achieving those results also will require re-energizing core supporters—at all giving levels—whose generosity of time and resources powers the Jewish community.

In closing, a word of appreciation: Although this preface is signed by this project's three instigators, it has taken the wisdom and resources of many more people to bring this project to fruition. We are grateful to the diverse national group of funders whose resources made this possible, and we are indebted to their trustees and professional leaders, many of whom invested their experience and expertise in design and implementation. The credits on page 25 only hint at the depth and breadth of their commitment.

In fact, the process that led to this ground-breaking study and its resulting reports is a microcosm, and hopefully a harbinger, of the kind of cooperation we believe is necessary in the years to come. This project brought together a broad array of stakeholders, each motivated by particular objectives yet committed to a shared vision. They found common purpose to achieve a goal that was beyond the capacity of any of us as individuals or the organizations we represent. That spirit of collaboration and generosity is a fitting reflection of our study's key findings about the charitable ethos of American Jews—that we are indeed, *connected to give*.

*Joshua H. Avedon, J. Shawn Landres, and Jeffrey R. Solomon*  
Los Angeles and New York  
September 3, 2013

# KEY FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN JEWISH GIVING

Jim Gerstein, Steven M. Cohen, & J. Shawn Landres

## OVERVIEW

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American Jews are clearly committed to charitable giving. They give at high rates to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. The more connected American Jews are to Jewish social networks and Jewish communities, the more likely they are to give, not only to Jewish organizations but to non-Jewish organizations as well. At the same time, the data also provide reasons for concern and reflection regarding the future of giving to Jewish organizations. Jewish philanthropic and nonprofit leaders face the increasingly difficult task of raising money in an uncertain economic climate, in a new era of global connectivity where charitable options have grown exponentially, and at a time when Jews' relationships with Jewish collectivity are more complex, if not diminished—especially among non-Orthodox Jews.

### ***Connected to Give: Key Findings***

This is the first in a series of publications based on the National Study of American Jewish Giving and the companion National Study of American Religious Giving (a parallel survey of non-Jewish Americans). The mission of *Connected to Give* is to provide the first comprehensive examination of the charitable behavior of Americans. *Connected to Give: Key Findings* presents the initial top-level findings and overall narrative that emerges from the study. This initial report is an examination of the relationship between the charitable giving behavior of American Jews and:

- ▶ their key demographics (especially age and income);
- ▶ their motivations for giving;
- ▶ the types of organizations to which they contribute (both Jewish and non-Jewish); and
- ▶ comparisons with giving patterns among non-Jewish Americans.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Demographics and Giving***

This report begins by mapping the relationships between respondents' demographic characteristics and measures of their charitable giving.<sup>2</sup> The specific measures used in this analysis are:

- ▶ whether individuals give to any cause;
- ▶ whether they give to Jewish organizations;
- ▶ the average amount given to Jewish organizations;
- ▶ whether they give to non-Jewish organizations; and
- ▶ the average amount given to non-Jewish organizations.<sup>3</sup>

# MEASURING JEWISH CONNECTEDNESS

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For our analysis of non-Orthodox Jews, we constructed an index of Jewish social engagement built from four components that are both empirically related to one another and related to the likelihood of donating to Jewish causes. They are: 1) family status (in-married, non-married, and intermarried); 2) proportion of close friends who are Jewish (four levels from few or none to all or almost all); 3) attendance at Jewish religious services (four levels from never to every week); and 4) whether one volunteers for a charitable or religious organization. As such, the index draws upon four domains of social interaction, from most to least intimate: self, family, friends, and community. For presentation purposes, we grouped scores on the index into four groups of roughly equal size: very low (24%), low (25%), moderate (24%), and high (28%).

Significantly, regardless of the measures we used, alternative measures of Jewish engagement yielded very similar results. The index of Jewish social engagement predicts giving better than any other combination of four Jewish engagement items available in the study. Expansion to include a fifth or sixth item would not significantly improve the ability of the Index to predict whether one donates to a Jewish cause.

In other words, knowing people's marital background, their number of Jewish friends, frequency of religious service attendance, and whether they volunteer for a religious or charitable organization provides a very strong basis upon which to predict whether they donate to any Jewish cause. Those who are intermarried, have few Jewish friends, never attend services, and decline to volunteer are very unlikely to donate. In contrast, in-married Jews with all Jewish friends who attend services weekly and volunteer for charitable or religious causes almost always make donations to Jewish causes.

## FIVE KEY FINDINGS

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Five key findings break through as critical takeaways for understanding the charitable behavior of American Jews.

1



### **Most American Jews are charitable givers.**

76% of American Jews report that they made a charitable contribution in 2012; median annual giving was \$1,200.

2



### **Most Jews who make charitable contributions give to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.**

Among Jews who make charitable contributions, nearly all of them (92%) give to a non-Jewish organization and the vast majority (79%) gives to a Jewish organization.



3



**Engagement with Jewish community is a paramount driver of Jewish charitable giving and even drives giving to non-Jewish organizations.**

The biggest factor influencing American Jews to make a charitable contribution is an individual's connection to and engagement with the Jewish community.

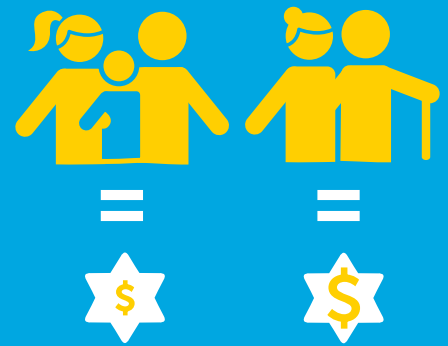
4



**As the income levels of American Jews rise, so do all measures of their charitable giving.**

While social engagement is the most important factor behind charitable giving, income also plays a key role. As income increases, the incidence of giving increases.

5



**Although age is not a driving factor in the incidence and amount of charitable giving overall, younger Jews clearly are less likely to give to Jewish organizations.**

While younger Jews appear at first glance less likely than older Jews to give to any cause... younger Jews are more likely than older Jews to have made contributions through new methods (such as text message, giving circles, and crowdfunding sites).

1



## KEY FINDING 1

### Most American Jews are charitable givers.

76% of American Jews report that they made a charitable contribution in 2012; median annual giving was \$1,200.<sup>4</sup> Giving among Jews is robust and compares favorably with the rest of the United States population (63% of non-Jews made a charitable contribution and the median annual giving was \$660). While 60% of American Jews make charitable contributions to Jewish organizations, 61% of non-Jews who have a religious affiliation give to religious organizations.

2

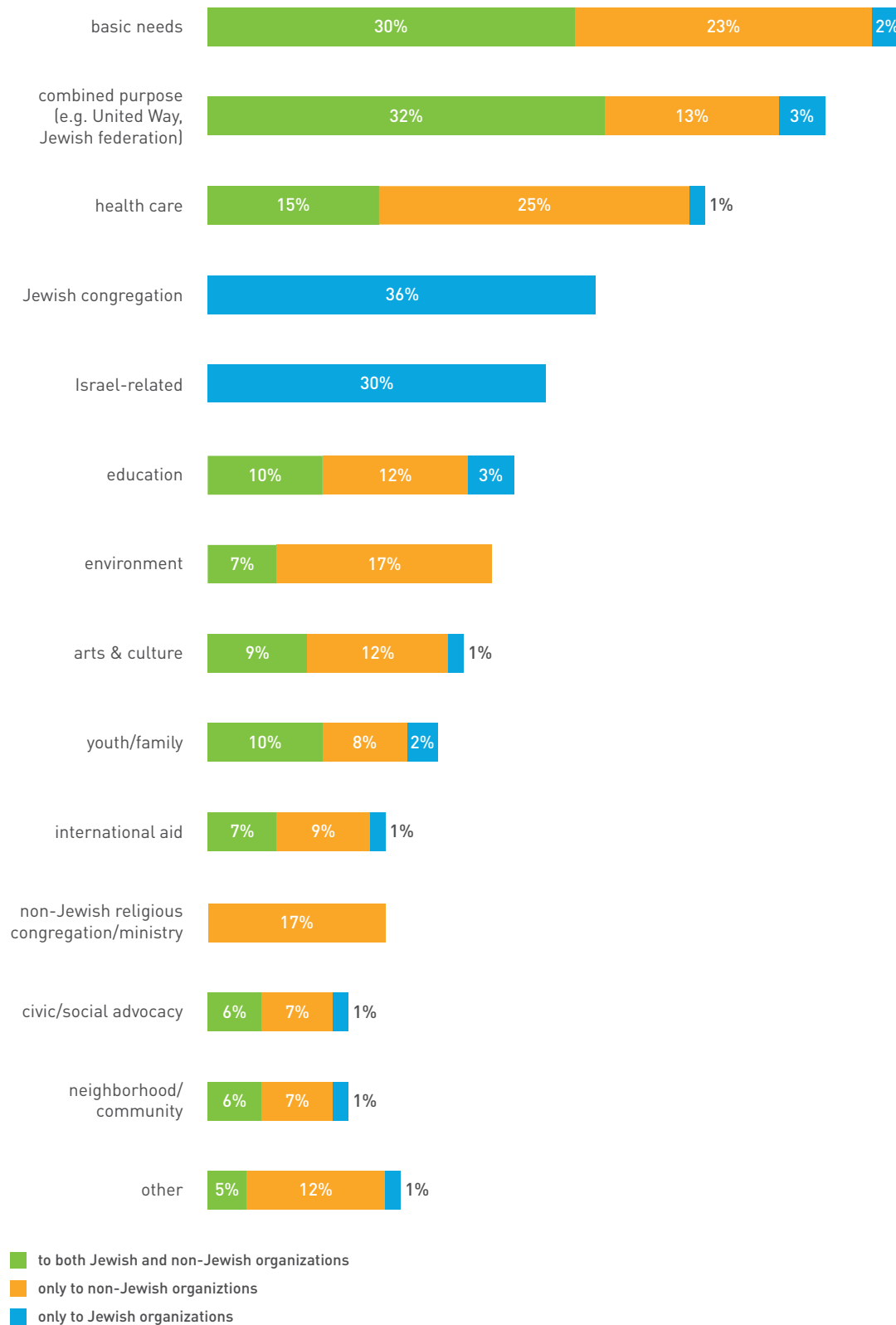


## KEY FINDING 2

### Most Jews who make charitable contributions give to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.

Among Jews who make charitable contributions, nearly all of them (92%) give to a non-Jewish organization and the vast majority (79%) gives to a Jewish organization. For American Jews, once an individual takes the step of becoming a donor, there is a high likelihood that she or he will donate to a Jewish organization. However, overall, Jews are more likely to support non-Jewish organizations than Jewish ones; and this difference is particularly striking for basic needs, health, arts, and environmental causes. 21% of Jewish donors gave only to non-Jewish organizations; 4% gave only to Jewish organizations.

## Giving to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations by cause



# 3



## KEY FINDING 3

### Engagement with Jewish community is a paramount driver of Jewish charitable giving and even drives giving to non-Jewish organizations.

The biggest factor influencing American Jews to make a charitable contribution is an individual's connection to and engagement with the Jewish community. Whether it is religious service attendance, in-marriage, having Jewish friends, or volunteering for a religious or charitable organizations—*any* sort of connection to Jewish social networks or Jewish communities results in much greater likelihood of charitable giving. The dynamics associated with identifying with any specific aspect of being Jewish (secular, religious, cultural) are even more pronounced when it comes to the likelihood of giving to Jewish organizations.

### *Jewish Engagement and Connection*

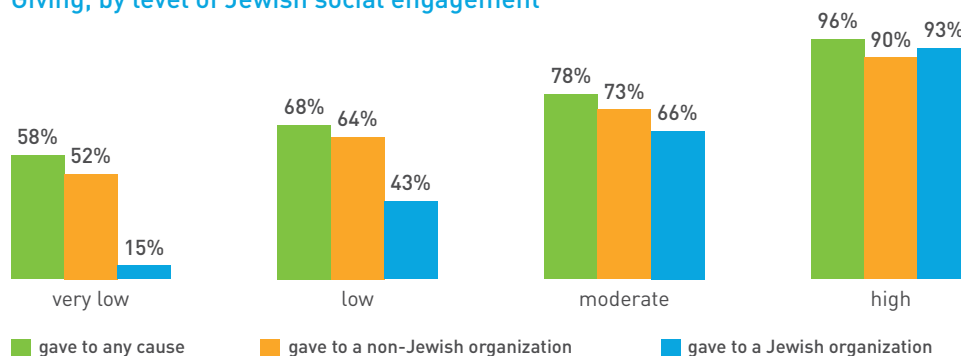
The strongest predictor of charitable giving among Jews is their level of engagement with and connection to the Jewish community. Jewish connection and engagement strongly predicts whether Jews give to any cause, and it *very strongly* predicts whether they give to a Jewish organization.<sup>5</sup>

These findings were reinforced in our focus group discussions—both with Jews who donate to Jewish organizations and with Jews who donate only to non-Jewish organizations. Among focus group participants, those who do not give to Jewish organizations say that they feel Jewish and want to be part of the Jewish community. However, it is clear from their language and description of community that they do not have the same connection to or desire to engage with the Jewish community that is seen in the donors to Jewish organizations.

Those who give to Jewish organizations speak in great detail about the impact of their family background and the values instilled in them by their parents and grandparents. The focus group participants did not necessarily view these as “Jewish values,” but rather as “my family’s values;” however, the values they described clearly were rooted in Jewish experiences. These donors cite the desire to connect with the Jewish community as the reason to give to a Jewish organization over a non-Jewish organization. However, they do *not* give to Jewish organizations in order to “strengthen the Jewish community.” They see the Jewish community as strong and not in need of help; rather, Jews want to help others and want others to see that Jews care; this is what their family taught them. These findings also are consistent with survey findings regarding the relative importance of motivations for giving, to the extent that more Jews cited the desire to live up to their family’s values or to set an example for others than cited commitments to being Jewish or the belief that their giving would help improve Jewish community life.

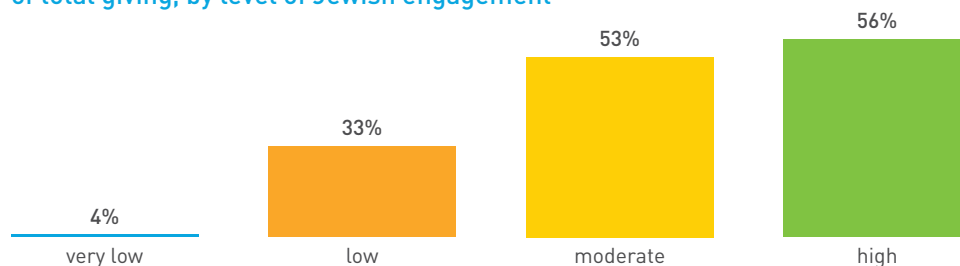
People with a high level of Jewish social engagement give to all causes at considerably higher rates than those with lower levels of Jewish social engagement (moderate, low, and very low). Jews who have a moderate to high level of Jewish social engagement give to organizations at a significantly higher rate. While 66% of “moderate” donors give to a Jewish organization, 43% of “lows” and 15% of “very lows” did the same.

### Giving, by level of Jewish social engagement



The annual average amount given to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations further demonstrates the impact of Jewish social engagement. Overall, 28% of American Jews—but 46% of Jewish donors to Jewish organizations—have high levels of Jewish social engagement. Those with a high level of Jewish social engagement contribute 5.4 times as much as the “very lows” to all causes (\$5,084 among the “highs” compared to \$949 among the “very lows”), and 67.3 times as much to Jewish organizations (\$2,825 compared to \$42). This finding is consistent with the finding that greater connection to Jewish community produces greater giving in general and greater connection to community produces *much* greater giving to Jewish organizations.

### Amount given to Jewish organizations as percentage of total giving, by level of Jewish engagement



### Motivations

Donors report a wide variety of motivations for their charitable giving. Among others, these include altruism, social considerations, and Jewish commitments.<sup>6</sup> However, the centrality of connectedness and engagement with Jewish community in charitable behavior raises a question: what role do motivations play in charitable behavior? In other words, “Don’t motivations matter in the decision to give—and what are these motivations?”

First, the survey results indicate that **specific motivations are not as strong a factor in giving as is personal connectedness to one's community**. This pattern was also evident in the focus groups, where lengthy discussions about motivations revealed that most motivations are reinforcing and a single motivation rarely dominates. The focus groups suggest that motivations generally speak to the decision about which particular organization to support but not about whether to give at all, nor whether to prioritize a Jewish (or non-Jewish) organization.

#### Non-Orthodox saying “extremely important” or “very important”

feeling that those who have more should help those with less	57%
a belief that my charitable giving will help make the world a better place	57%
the feeling that I am fortunate and want to give back to society	57%
a belief that my charitable giving can achieve change or bring about a desired impact	55%
a desire to meet critical needs in the community and support worthwhile causes	52%
a desire to support an organization that benefitted me or someone close to me	49%
a desire to live up to values instilled in me by my parents or grandparents	48%
a spontaneous reaction to help people in an immediate disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane	47%
a desire to set an example for children, future generations, my community, or my social network	47%
a commitment to support the same causes or organizations on a regular basis	43%
a commitment to being Jewish	41%
a belief that my giving will help improve Jewish life and the Jewish community	38%
the desire to leave a lasting legacy	27%
the understanding that giving is expected within my social network	24%
being asked to give by a friend or associate	24%
charitable giving can help me in my work life	21%

Engagement with the Jewish community is a stronger predictor of giving overall than is donor altruism, and a much stronger predictor of giving to Jewish organizations. The finding is even more pronounced when looking at the amount of money that one gives to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. In short, whether (and how much) you give is far more a function of your identity and connections rather than what you say motivates you.

# KEY FINDING 4

## As the income levels of American Jews rise, so do all measures of their charitable giving.

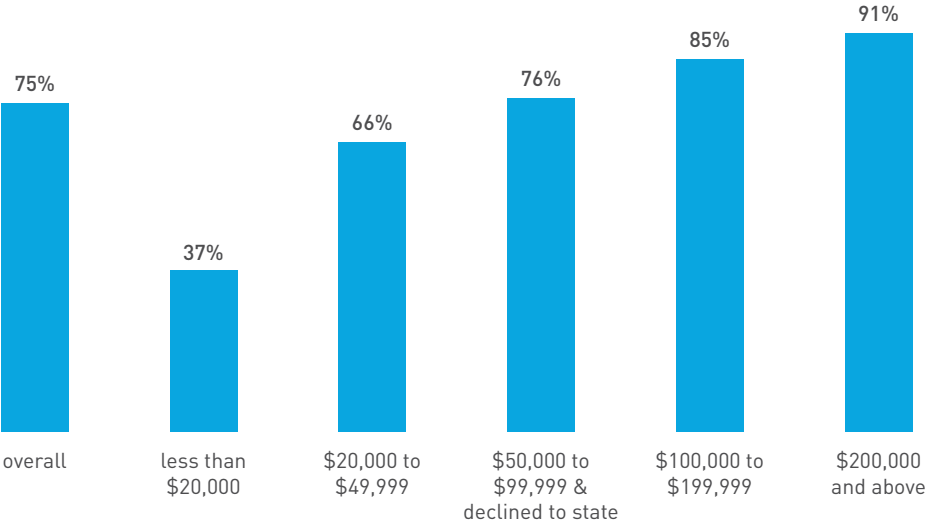
While social engagement is the most important factor behind charitable giving, income also plays a key role. As income increases, the incidence of giving increases: 60% of Jewish households earning less than \$50,000 make a charitable contribution; 76% among those earning \$50,000-\$99,999; 86% among those earning \$100,000-\$199,999; and 91% among those earning \$200,000 or more.

### Income

Income is a critical variable when examining charitable behavior, and the data underscore its importance in a rather straightforward and intuitive manner. Simply stated, all measures of charitable giving rise as income rises. Whether it is the amount someone contributes or simply the decision to make a contribution, income plays a central role, among both Jews and non-Jews.

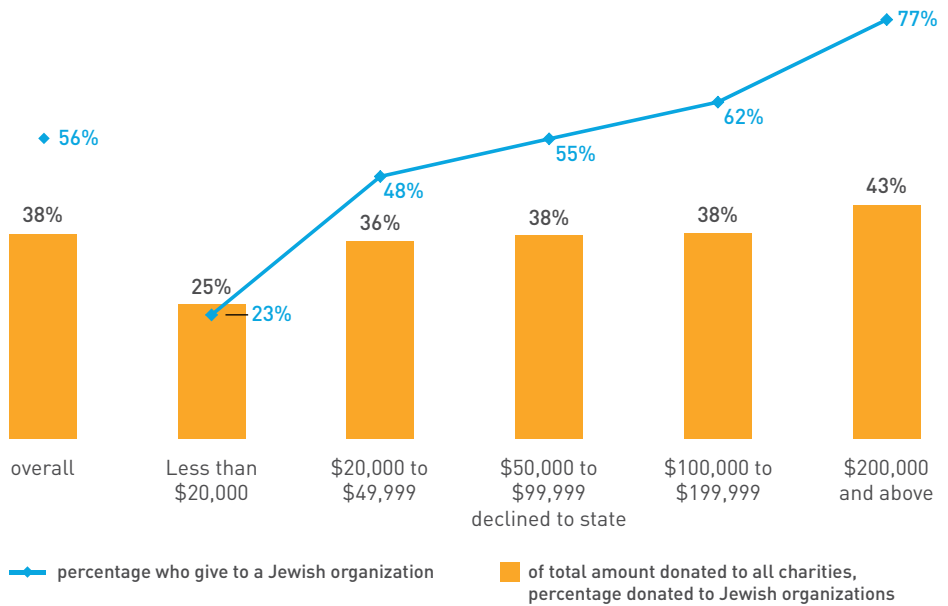
At every income level above \$20,000 per year, a majority of American Jews makes a charitable contribution. Among non-Orthodox Jews earning less than \$20,000, 37% make a charitable contribution. The incidence of giving increases sharply after passing the \$20,000 per year threshold and continues to rise steadily as income rises, reaching 91% of households with annual income of \$200,000 or more. The \$20,000 level also is an important threshold for contribution levels. While the average annual amount that an individual making less than \$20,000 per year gives to a charitable cause is \$124, this more than quadruples (to \$535) among individuals making \$20,000-\$49,999 and increases steadily thereafter, with a substantial increase in giving amounts among households with the highest annual incomes.

### Percentage of people who give, by income



While the income effect is present throughout the data, it is especially pronounced with charitable giving to Jewish organizations. This dynamic is clear when looking at *whether* an individual gives to a Jewish organization and *what proportion* of an individual's charitable dollars gets directed to a Jewish organization. Among those with the highest annual incomes, both the percentage of people who give to Jewish organizations jumps markedly at the \$250,000 level, as does the percentage of one's charitable dollars that goes to a Jewish organization.

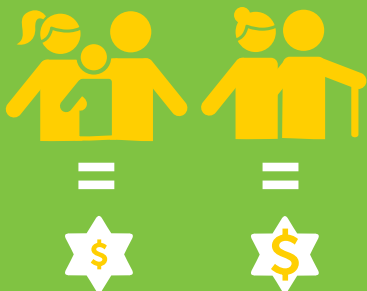
Giving to Jewish organizations by income



KEY FINDING 5

Although age is not a driving factor in the incidence and amount of charitable giving overall, younger Jews clearly are less likely to give to Jewish organizations.

The data suggest that giving will increase as individuals get older and earn higher incomes. While younger Jews appear at first glance less likely than older Jews to give to any cause, the differences are less significant after taking income into account. Nevertheless, younger Jews are less likely to give to specific types of causes, including those serving a combination of purposes (such as Jewish federations or the United Way), and they are less likely to give to Jewish organizations (49% of non-Orthodox Jews 18-39 give to a Jewish organization, compared to 62% of those over 40 years-old). Moreover, younger Jews are more likely than older Jews to have made contributions through new methods (such as text message, giving circles, and crowdfunding sites).

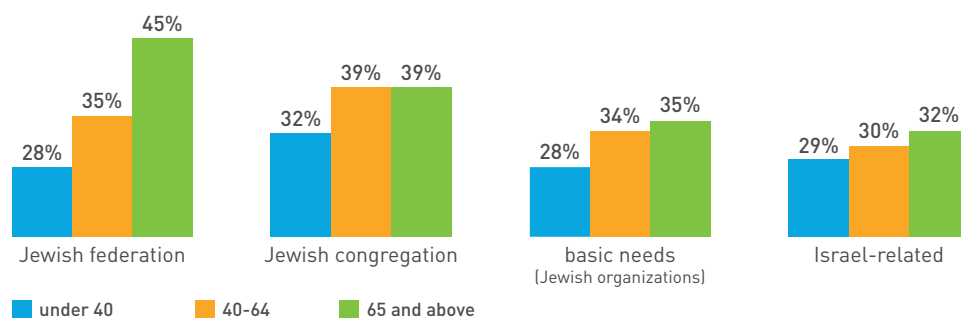




## Age

Age is *not* a driving factor in whether someone engages in charitable giving, but the evidence does suggest that age affects whether someone gives to a Jewish organization. While it *is* true that charitable giving does increase as age increases, this pattern is primarily a function of rising income levels rather than age. Ages 40-64 are the “peak” giving years in terms of the amount that people give to charitable causes; these also are the ages with the greatest percentage of individuals earning \$250,000 or higher.

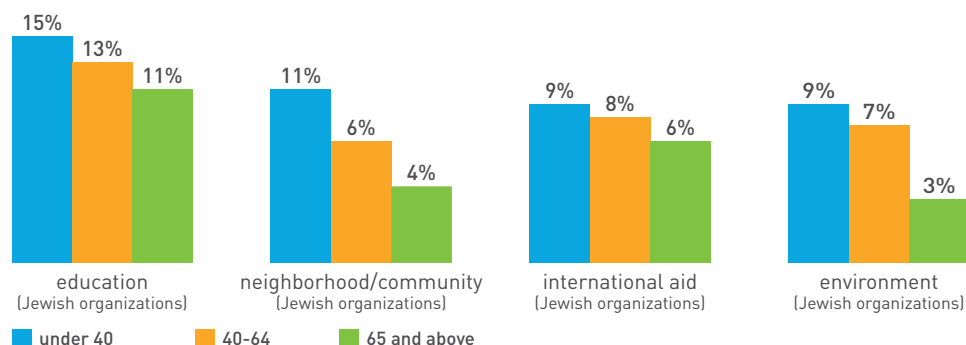
### Giving to Jewish organizations by cause and age



Older Jews give at a somewhat higher rate to Jewish organizations than younger Jews. Among Jews over 64 years of age who make charitable contributions, 81% of them give to Jewish organizations. This figure decreases slightly to 78% among 40-64 year-olds, and then drops to 72% among Jews under 40 years old.

Younger and older non-Orthodox Jews vary somewhat with respect to which *kind* of Jewish organizations they support. While a big gap separates younger and older Jews when it comes to contributing to Jewish federations, the gap narrows—and is even reversed in some cases—for contributions to single-purpose Jewish organizations. For example, 28% of Jews under 40 years of age give to Jewish federations (compared to 35% of 40-64 year-olds and 45% of those over 64). On the other hand, 11% of Jews under 40 years of age donate to organizations that improve neighborhoods and communities (compared to 6% of 40-64 year-olds and 4% of those over 64). In other words, among younger Jews, federation giving is relatively less popular than among their elders; and giving to certain single-purpose Jewish organizations is notably more popular.

### Giving to Jewish organizations by cause and age



The age-related drop-off in giving is much sharper for Jewish federations than it is for organizations working in arts & culture, Israel, health care, and basic needs. Moreover, in some areas, the incidence of giving to Jewish organizations is greater among younger Jews than among older Jews, including neighborhood/community, the environment, and international aid.

The age-related patterns reflect both life cycle effects and what social scientists call “birth cohort effects.” The former moderate over time; the latter are enduring over time. Thus, to some degree, younger adults’ distance from Jewish giving will diminish in time. To the extent that they have Jewish children, today’s younger Jews will become more engaged with Jewish community, resulting (as previously noted) in significantly greater giving to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. At the same time, these patterns also speak to changes in today’s society and will persist even as individuals age.

Going beyond current patterns of actual giving, the survey’s attitudinal data do show important age-related variations. For example, younger Jews are more likely than their older Jewish counterparts to say they would support a Jewish organization “if it serves non-Jewish people and causes” (44% of those under 40, compared to 29% of 40-64 year-olds and 18% of those over 64); and they have more trouble finding Jewish organizations that address the issues important to them (34% of under-40s, compared to 23% of 40-64 year-olds and 16% of those over 64). Younger Jews also are more open to both nonprofit and philanthropic innovation. They are more willing to support an organization that “has not yet proven itself but offers a different approach to address a persistent problem that has been difficult to solve” (50% of under-40s, compared to 42% of 40-64 year-olds and 25% of those over 64) and they are much more likely to have made a contribution using an innovative giving method such as via mobile phone text message, crowdfunding website, giving circle, microloan fund, or voting in an online competition (37% of under-40s, compared to 21% of 40-64 year-olds and 10% of those over 64).

## AMERICAN JEWS IN CONTEXT

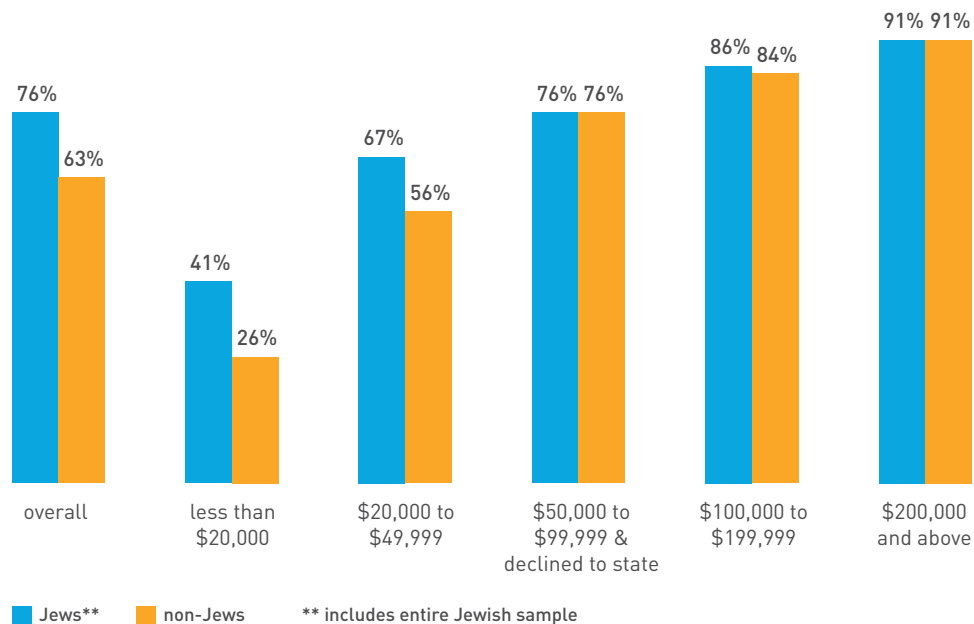
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While the NSAJG focuses on Jewish charitable behavior and the dynamics within the Jewish population, our comparison sample of non-Jewish households helps provide understanding of Jewish giving in the context of the broader American public. A forthcoming report in the *Connected to Give* series, due out in November 2013, will feature the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy’s comprehensive analysis of the various philanthropic behaviors of evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, unaffiliated, and non-religious households. In the interim, we highlight a few key findings regarding differences between giving patterns among non-Jews.

## Among households with middle and higher annual incomes, Jews and non-Jews give at roughly equivalent rates;

Among Jews earning at least \$100,000 per year, 88% make charitable contributions (compared to 85% of non-Jews). Giving among those earning \$50,000-\$99,999 per year is the exact same (76%) among Jews and non-Jews. But we find a large difference at incomes below \$50,000 per year (60% among Jews; 46% among non-Jews). Overall, the 76% overall charitable giving rate among Jews exceeds the 63% of non-Jews who make a charitable contribution, including Catholics (69%), Protestants (65%), agnostics (65%) and atheists (60%).

### Giving by Jews and non-Jews by income



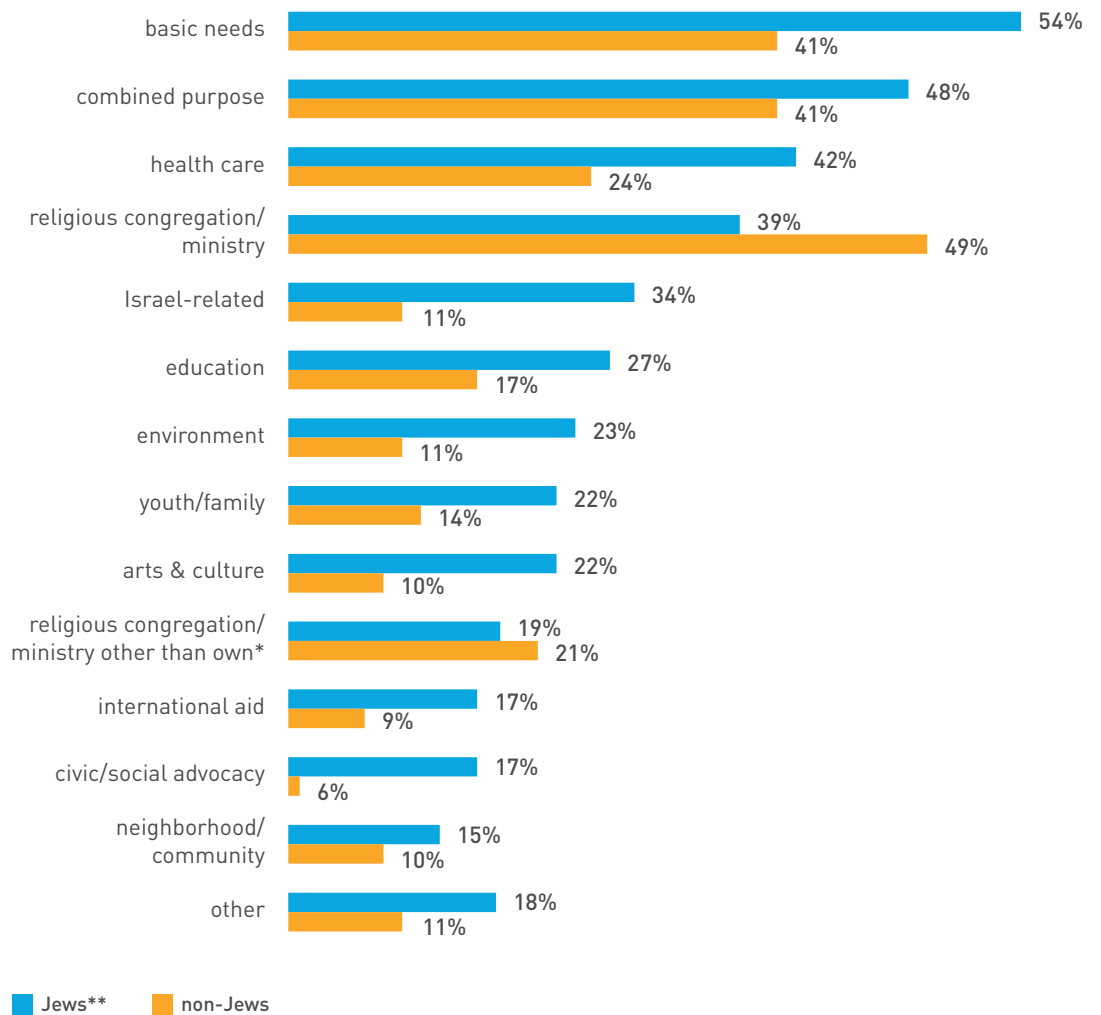
## Jews and non-Jews give at similar rates to religiously affiliated organizations.

60% of Jews give to Jewish organizations, and 61% of non-Jews who have a religious affiliation give to religious congregations or other non-profit organizations that are religiously-affiliated.<sup>7</sup>

## Jews contribute more than non-Jews to all types of charitable organizations, except religious congregations.

Of all the giving areas in the study, from basic needs to youth, non-Jews gave at higher rates in only one: to their own religious congregation than Jews (49% among non-Jews, compared to 39% of Jews). Giving to a religious congregation other than one's own was 19% among both Jews and non-Jews. In all other categories (such as basic needs, combined purpose organizations, health care, etc.), Jews were more likely to give than non-Jews.

## Patterns of Jewish and non-Jewish giving by cause



\*Not strictly comparable: Jewish respondents were asked about giving to “non-Jewish congregations/ministries,” while non-Jewish respondents were asked about giving to “any other” congregations/ministries

\*\*Includes entire Jewish sample

## CONCLUSION

American Jewish charitable activity is impressive and strong, particularly when compared to the broader population and also when looking at the high rates of giving to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. American Jews’ proven commitment to charitable giving should be heartening, especially to philanthropists and nonprofit organizational leaders. But the Jewish charitable ecosystem did not get where it is by resting on its laurels. Today, Jewish community leaders face a strategic crossroads as a new generation of young adults emerges in an America—and a world—that is fundamentally different from what previous generations faced.

This initial report has focused on Jewish social connectedness, income and age because they stand out as key factors in American Jewish giving. The data suggest that *who you are* has a stronger relationship with Jewish charitable giving than *how you feel*. Over the next several months, the *Connected to Give* series will delve deeper into the findings from the National Study of American Jewish Giving and the National Study of American Religious Giving. As the identities of American Jews and non-Jews alike are reshaped by demographic changes at home and connectivity across the globe, *Connected to Give* will highlight both continuity and change, in the hope of offering new perspectives on charitable giving in America.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The National Study of American Jewish Giving marks the first time that a large-scale nationally representative sample of American Jews have reported their giving according to internationally replicated categories used by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's ongoing Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS), and the motivations used in Indiana's ongoing Bank of America High Net Worth Study. The thirteen cause areas are: religious congregations or religious activity/spiritual development; combined purpose; basic needs; health; education; youth and family services; arts and culture; neighborhood and community improvement; environmental preservation and animal protection; Israel-related organizations; international aid; civic and social advocacy; other (respondent-defined).

<sup>2</sup> The results that are reported in this analysis do not include Orthodox Jews because their substantially higher degree of religious engagement, compared to non-Orthodox Jews, skews data and requires a fundamentally different approach in terms of outreach. Later in this report, Orthodox Jews are included in the analysis when comparing the American Jewish population to the non-Jewish population. Future reporting in the *Connected to Give* series will address giving among Orthodox Jews.

<sup>3</sup> Because large contributions can skew results when calculating average contributions, the research team is cautious when discussing the dollar amounts that people report giving. However, for the purposes of this analysis, which compares average contributions to Jewish and non-Jewish causes, we find the use of averages to be a reasonable measure for looking at whether certain demographics are giving more or less to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all data reported here are drawn from the National Study of American Jewish Giving and the National Study of American Religious Giving. For more information about these studies, please visit [connectedtogive.org](http://connectedtogive.org).

<sup>5</sup> When it comes to age, 33% of those over 64 years old have high levels of Jewish social engagement, compared with 28% of those 40-64 and 22% of those under 40. Indeed, a majority of Jews under 40—nearly 54%—have very low or low levels of Jewish social engagement, as do nearly half of Jews aged 40-64, and 41% of those 65 and older.

<sup>6</sup> We devised measures of motivations to give by performing a factor analysis on questions about the importance of 16 motivations for giving, 9 of which were drawn from Indiana University's standard battery. The factor analysis found that 12 of the questions clustered into three groups; these yielded indices we labeled as Jewish Motivation to Give (Q91, Q101), Altruistic Motivation to Give (Q90, Q93, Q94, Q99, Q100, Q102), and Social Motivation to Give (Q88, Q89, Q92, Q97), with each title serving as an approximate summary of the items (questions) contained within the respective index. For a full list of the questions, please see the survey frequencies, available online at [connectedtogive.org](http://connectedtogive.org)

<sup>7</sup> The definition of "religious organization" in the calculation for non-Jews includes religious congregations, and any of the 11 other purposes where some of the giving went to religious organizations; it does not include gifts by non-Jews to Israel-related organizations.

## AFTERWORD

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The initial findings from *Connected to Give* raise important questions about charitable giving and American Jewry. Mapping the landscape is important, but it's actually how we navigate the territory that will determine where the journey leads. The findings in this report describe a moment in time, but we hope they point the way to new approaches that meet the needs of donors, organizations, and beneficiaries alike. As observers and conveners, it may not be our role to determine those prescriptions. Still, the implications of the report bear exploration.

The data clearly describe a fertile environment for the development of generous charitable donors, at every level of giving. Because we know that giving increases as the capacity to give increases, it's also an argument for building relationships early, before that capacity fully emerges and is fully defined. Not only will people become more generous and discerning donors as they mature, but relationships begun for interpersonal and community building purposes will literally pay off if and when those donors become more financially successful.

What is also clear is that the narrative of scarcity and competition for donor dollars is neither accurate nor helpful. A communal system such as the organized Jewish community is defined by its interconnectedness. Organizations don't need to see themselves as fighting over a small piece of a limited philanthropic pie. Rather, they might consider applying their competitive instincts to improving the quality of their programs, which must compete for Jewish donor attention with worthy causes and effective organizations far beyond the Jewish context. By working together to make the pie bigger, all organizations will benefit, because bigger pies have bigger pieces.

Indeed, donors, especially younger ones, increasingly expect and even require that organizations demonstrate their impact and be transparent in their methods. New technologies and ways of giving allow an immediacy and intimacy that permits donors to connect with the causes they care about without layers of organization or bureaucracy to obscure the view. With that clarity comes a demand for organizations to evidence their vision and purpose, not just in what they do, but also in how they do it.

We also know that despite the extraordinary generosity of Jews in giving to charitable causes, some of the motivations frequently attributed to them, and even the language used to engage them, do not always resonate. Those seeking funding might listen more carefully to how donors think, feel, and speak about their charitable giving, rather than projecting onto them preconceived ideas about why they give or mistaking what really may be a relationship-building moment or an educational opportunity as a chance to land a prospect. Not only could that lead to more meaningful connections, but it could help bridge the gap that some respondents described when discussing their interactions with organizations soliciting their support.

At the same time, however, our findings also suggest that there is ample opportunity to engage charitable givers in a conversation about the roots of their values, and how those roots grew from the soil of the Jewish tradition. By celebrating all giving by Jews as “Jewish giving”—regardless of the cause or beneficiaries—we strengthen those roots. If donors feel that giving to the causes they care most about is part of their heritage, their desire to connect with that heritage just might increase. And the more connected they are to each other, and to the Jewish community, the more they will be *connected to give*.

JHA, JSL, & JRS

## METHODS

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The core research instrument, a national survey of nearly 3,000 American Jews, largely replicated the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's bi-annual Center on Philanthropy Panel Study and Bank of America High Net Worth Study. Indiana University's survey instrument, first fielded in 2001, serves as the benchmark measure for American philanthropy. Professor Steven M. Cohen, of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), supplied selected Jewish engagement questions used in numerous Jewish community studies across the United States. Professor Sarah Benor of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Nonprofit Management designed and led an ethnographic inquiry into language, motivations and the social dynamics of giving.

In order to understand giving by American Jews more fully, the research team also conducted a national survey of non-Jews using the same questionnaire, modified to address different religious groups. The study also drew on focus groups with different types of Jewish donors, Jewish organizational professionals, and philanthropic advisers. The full body of research in the NSAJG includes the following quantitative and qualitative program:

- ▶ National survey of 2,911 American Jewish households, with an oversample of households with incomes of \$100,000 and higher
- ▶ National survey of 1,951 non-Jews in non-Jewish households, with an oversample of households with incomes of \$100,000 and higher
- ▶ 4 focus groups with Jews who contribute to Jewish causes or organizations
- ▶ 4 focus groups with Jews who contribute to charitable causes, but do not contribute to Jewish causes or organizations
- ▶ 2 focus groups with CEOs, executive directors, and development directors at Jewish organizations
- ▶ 1 focus group with advisers to foundations or philanthropists in Jewish settings
- ▶ 1 focus group with advisers to foundations or philanthropists who are Jewish, but do not work in Jewish settings
- ▶ Ethnographic fieldwork at more than 20 Jewish and non-Jewish giving circles

The National Study of American Jewish Giving and National Study of American Religious Giving data were collected in two surveys administered by email invitation to web-based panels hosted by Mountain West Research Center, a division of Survey Sampling International. The panel, which is regularly updated and consists of nearly 900,000 Americans, has been compiled through a mixture of consumer databases, recruitment through random digit dialing, and internet advertising.



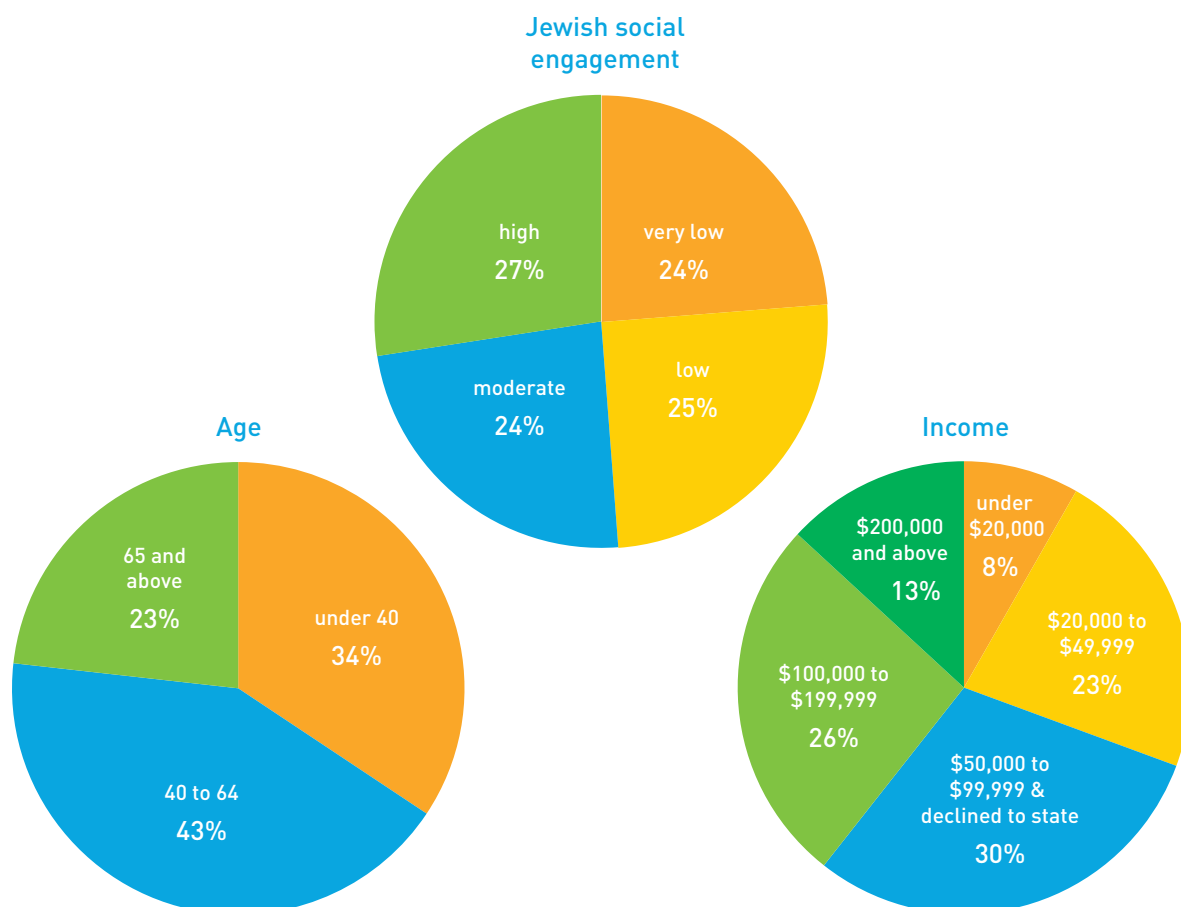
The unit of analysis in the Jewish survey is Jewish household, and respondents in the Jewish survey were asked a series of screening questions in order to qualify for participation:

- 1 Do you consider yourself Jewish?
- 2 (Among married or living with a partner) Does your spouse/partner consider himself or herself Jewish?
- 3 Is your religion Judaism?
- 4 (Among married or living with a partner) Is your spouse's/partner's religion Judaism?

In order to qualify, a respondent must either consider themselves Jewish OR say their religion is Judaism OR have a spouse/partner who considers themselves Jewish OR have a spouse/partner who says their religion is Judaism.

The Jewish survey results were weighted using targets derived from the 2001 National Jewish Population Study (United States) and the 2011 New York Jewish Population Study (Westchester, New York City and Long Island).

The non-Jewish survey results were weighted using U.S. Census targets. The charitable giving results in the non-Jewish survey closely match the results and trends found in Indiana University's biennial Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS).



## CONNECTED TO GIVE CONSORTIUM

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**Funding Partners:** Andrea & Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, Emanuel J. Friedman Philanthropies, Harold Grinspoon Foundation, Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego/Leichtag Foundation Partnership, Koret Foundation, Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation, Marcus Foundation, Joseph Meyerhoff and Rebecca Meyerhoff Awards Committee, Jack and Goldie Wolfe Miller Fund, The Morningstar Foundation, The Natan Fund, Rose Community Foundation (Denver), Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and Birthright Israel NEXT. Additional support was provided by Mandell Berman.

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- ▶ Professor Steven M. Cohen, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Berman Jewish Policy Archive
- ▶ Professor Sarah Bunin Benor, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
- ▶ Professor Evelyn Dean-Olmsted, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras
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# ABOUT JUMPSTART

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Jumpstart is a philanthropic research & design lab based in Los Angeles. Jumpstart's unique combination of research, convenings, and funding enables creative changemakers—philanthropists and institutional leaders alike—to realize their own visions and advance the common good. Funders turn to Jumpstart for analysis and forecasting based on original research reports such as *The Innovation Ecosystem* (2009), *Haskalah 2.0* (2010), *The 2010 Survey of New Jewish Initiatives in Europe: Key Findings* (2010), *The Jewish Innovation Economy* (2011), and the *Connected to Give* report series (2013). For funders seeking to achieve collective impact, Jumpstart designs and facilitates highly collaborative summits that connect, inform, and empower leaders with the capacity to create meaningful change in their communities. Through fiscal sponsorship and other funding vehicles, Jumpstart delivers resources to new initiatives that are reshaping community life around the world. For more information, please visit [jumpstartlabs.org](http://jumpstartlabs.org) or email [connect@jumpstartlabs.org](mailto:connect@jumpstartlabs.org).

## How to cite this report

Jim Gerstein, Steven M. Cohen, and J. Shawn Landres. 2013. *Connected to Give: Key Findings from the National Study of American Jewish Giving*. Los Angeles: Jumpstart.

## Disclaimer

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